

Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Secretariat of the Assembly

Synopsis

26 January 2007

The Bureau of the Assembly, meeting on Friday 26 January 2007 in Strasbourg with Mr René van der Linden, President of the Assembly, in the Chair, as regards:

- ***Follow-up to the 1st Part of the 2007 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 22-26 January 2007):***

i. Current affairs debate on “*Threat to the European Court of Human Rights: urgent need for Russia to ratify Protocol 14*”: invited the Chairpersons of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Monitoring Committee or their representatives to visit Moscow for consultations with the appropriate committees of the State Duma as soon as possible after having first conferred with the Russian parliamentary delegation on the modalities of such a visit;

ii. Resolution 1532 (2007) “*Honouring of commitments and obligation by Armenia*”: decided to observe the forthcoming parliamentary elections in 2007 and the presidential election in 2008, subject to the receipt of an invitation from the parliament of Armenia;

iii. Resolution 1533 (2007) on the “*Current situation in Kosovo*”: asked the Political Affairs Committee to continue to follow this matter in the light of developments as regards the future status of Kosovo;

iv. Resolution 1535 (2007) on the “*Threats to the lives and freedom of expression of journalists*”: asked the Committee on Culture, Science and Education to present proposals to the Bureau for the follow-up to be given to paragraph 14 of this Resolution;

- ***Follow-up to the President’s visit to Minsk (18-20 January 2007):*** endorsed proposals made by the President of the Assembly to promote the respect of Council of Europe values in Belarus, on condition that concrete and tangible steps were first taken by the Belarus authorities in the direction sought;

- ***Standing Committee (Paris, 16 March 2007):*** took note of the draft agenda;

- ***2nd Part of the 2007 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 16-20 April 2007):*** adopted the draft agenda;

- **Report on the state of Human Rights and Democracy in Europe:**
 - i. took note of a letter from Mr Kosachev on this matter;
 - ii. was informed about the state of progress in the preparation of the report and confirmed its earlier decision to hold a debate on this report during the 2007 April part-Session, in principle on 18 April;
- **References and transmissions to committees:** see Appendix I;
- **Elections:**
 - i. *Appointment of Chairpersons of Ad hoc Committees of the Bureau in charge of observing elections:* agreed that the strict rotation principle so far observed in the appointment of chairpersons of ad hoc committees for each election should be replaced by the principle that, over the period of one calendar year, these positions be equitably distributed between political groups, though not necessarily in a strict rotation order;
 - ii. *Schedule of elections for 2007:* took note of the list of elections/referenda to be held in 2007 and falling under the categories mentioned in the revised guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
 - iii. *Parliamentary elections in Serbia (21 January 2007):* took note of a press release by the international election observation mission having observed these elections;
- **Follow-up to the Third Summit:**
 - i. Follow-up Committee on the Third Summit ("CM-Suivi3"): took note of the future participation by representatives of the Assembly in the work of this Committee;
 - ii. Forum for the Future of Democracy:
 - a. took note of the preparations of the Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy to be held in Stockholm/Sigtuna (Sweden) from 13 to 15 June 2007, on the theme 'Power and empowerment – the interdependence of democracy and human rights';
 - b. decided to set up an ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in this Forum, to be chaired by Mr Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD) and to be composed jointly of members of the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on the Forum for the future of Democracy of the Political Affairs Committee and of members of Assembly committees concerned;
- **Re-constitution of ad hoc Committees of the Bureau:**
 - i. *Ad Hoc Committee of Chairpersons of Political Groups (Presidential Committee):* re-constituted this Ad Hoc Committee;
 - ii. *Ad Hoc Committee on the implementation of Resolution 1416 (2005) on the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference:* re-constituted this Ad Hoc Committee;

- **Budgetary questions:**

i. *Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the financial year 2007:* in order to enable the Assembly to maintain its 2007 activities at a level comparable with that of 2006, approved the proposals contained in the memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Assembly;

ii. *Proposal for the apportionment of the allocation to political groups for 2007:* took note of a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat and approved the apportionment of the allocation to political groups for 2007;

- **Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2007:** appointed representatives for 2007 on the proposal of the President and the competent committees, as they appear in Appendix II;

- **Composition of the Monitoring Committee:** approved new members as proposed by the political groups, for ratification by the Assembly: Mr Berenyi (Slovakia, EPP/CD); Mr Chelemendik (Slovakia, EDG); Mr Khalil (Italy, UEL); Mr Sambevski ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", EPP/CD); and Mr Wita (Poland, EDG);

- **European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT):** approved the following list of candidates in respect of France to be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers:

- Mr Xavier RONSIN
- Mr Philippe GIRAUD
- Ms Marie-Thérèse LESUEUR DE GIVRY

- **Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris:** authorised the following meetings:

i. Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee: Berlin (Germany), 22-23 March 2007;

ii. Ad Hoc Sub-Committee and Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population: Brussels (Belgium), 28 February (afternoon; ad hoc Sub-Committee), 1-2 March 2007 (full Committee);

iii. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population: Corfu (Greece), 10-11 May 2007;

iv. Sub-Committee on Tourism Development (of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development): Faro (Portugal), 17-18 May 2007;

v. Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee): Skopje ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"), 14 May 2007;

- **Appointment of Assembly representatives for official activities:** in reply to formal invitations, took the following decisions:

i. Mr MacShane (United Kingdom, SOC) : NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session, Madeira (Portugal), 25-28 May 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);

ii. Mr Biberaj (Albania, EPP/CD) : 2nd Session of the Crans Montana Forum, Tirana (Albania), 10-12 May 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);

iii. Mrs Vermot-Mangold (Switzerland, SOC) and Mrs Rupperecht (Germany, SOC): IPU meeting, New York (USA), 1 March 2007 on the occasion of the 51st meeting of the Committee on the Status of Women;

- **Visit by rapporteur:** following a request by the Political Affairs Committee, authorised Mr Mercan, rapporteur on the "Situation in the Republics of central Asia", to conduct a fact-finding visit to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as to Turkmenistan in the context of the presidential elections in this country on 11 February 2007, all within the framework of the preparation of his report;

- **Cooperation agreement with the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan:** heard a statement by Mr Bizhanov, Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs, Defense and Security of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, presenting the annual report on progress achieved in the promotion of the principles stated in the Assembly's co-operation agreement with the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan;

- **Progress Report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (22 January – 16 April 2007):** appointed Mr José Vera Jardim (Portugal/SOC) as rapporteur;

- **Death sentences of the Bulgarian nurses and Palestinian doctor in Libya:** adopted a statement on this matter (see Appendix III);

- **Report of the Group of Wise Persons on the efficiency of the European Court of Human Rights:** decided to forward this report to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights in order to obtain its views, without prejudice to the opinion which the Assembly might formulate at a later stage;

- **Conference on the Parliamentary Dimension of election observation: applying common standards (Strasbourg, 15-16 February 2007):** took note of the revised draft programme of the conference;

- **Candidates for the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Malta:**

i. took note of the opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities on the proposal of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights;

ii. in the light of the above and following on the decision taken at its meeting on 15 December 2006, agreed to refer this issue to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for a report and to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for opinion;

iii. was informed that the President would send a letter to Maltese authorities recalling that the list of candidates for the post of judge to the ECHR in respect of Malta did not include at least one candidate belonging to the sex underrepresented on the Court and therefore did not meet the requirement laid down in the Assembly Resolution 1366 (2004), as modified by the Assembly Resolution 1426 (2005);

- ***Date and place of the next meeting:*** decided to hold the following meeting:
- . Paris, Thursday 15 March 2007 at 3 pm.

Kjell Torbiörn/Alexandra Alléon

cc.

Secretary General of the Assembly

Secretariat of the Assembly

Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly

Observers to the Assembly

Directors General

Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Secretary to the Committee of Ministers

Director of Communication

Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe



APPENDIX I

References and transmissions to committees

The Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references, subject to ratification by the Assembly:

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

1. **Doc. 11121**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Grachev and others
The prevention of the removal of radioactive metal from the Chernobyl zone, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*
2. **Doc. 11067**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Bemelsmans-Vedec and others
Candidates for the European Court of Human Rights, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for opinion*

B. REQUESTS TO EXTEND REFERENCES

1. **Doc. 10248**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Mooney and others
Respect for Human Rights in the fight against terrorism
Ref. no 2995 of 7 September 2004 – validity: 31 January 2007, extension until 30 June 2007
2. **Doc. 10448**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Wilkinson and others
The creation of transit centres outside the European Union
Ref. no 3059 of 18 March 2005 – Validity : 18 March 2007, extension until 31 December 2007
3. **Doc. 10180**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Holovaty and others
The principle of the rule of law
Ref. no 2998 of 7 September 2004 – validity: 31 March 2007, extension until 30 June 2007

APPENDIX II

Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2007:

. European Commission for Democracy through Law – Venice Commission: Mr Mota Amaral (Portugal, EPP/CD) and Mr Jurgens (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights);

. Council for Democratic Elections (of the Venice Commission): Mrs Durrieu (SOC, Political Affairs Committee), Mr Gross (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Mr Van den Brande (EPP/CD, Monitoring Committee) and as substitutes: Ms Severinsen (ALDE, Political Affairs Committee), Ms Batet (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Mr Zingeris (EDG, Monitoring Committee);

. European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – North-South Centre: a representative of the ALDE and Mr Sasi (EPP/CD, Committee on Economic Affairs and Development);

. European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance – ECRI: Mr Szabo (SOC, Political Affairs Committee), Mr Cilevics (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Mr Pollozhani (ALDE, Committee on Culture, Science and Education);

. Advisory Board for the Future of Democracy: the Chairperson of Political Affairs Committee and the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on the Forum for the Future of Democracy (according to availability);

. High-level group entrusted with examining the follow-up to the Juncker report: the President of the Assembly or his representative;

. Group of States against Corruption – GRECO: Mr. Bartumeu Cassany (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights);

. European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice - CEPEJ: Mr Hunault (EDG, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), at the request of the President;

. Council of Europe Committee for Works of Art: Mr Legendre (EPP/CD, Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education) and Mr O'Hara (SOC, Rapporteur on Museum Prize);

. Pan-European Federation for Heritage – Europa Nostra: Mr Zingeris (EDG, Committee on Culture, Science and Education);

Appendix III

Death sentences served on medics in Libya – statement of the PACE Bureau

Strasbourg, 26.01.2006 – The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), meeting today in Strasbourg, has approved the following statement:

“The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shares the deep shock expressed by its President, René van der Linden, when the death sentence was once again served on the Bulgarian nurses and Palestinian doctor by a Libyan Court on 19 December 2006.

This sentence is all the more outrageous because it results from a re-trial of the nurses and doctor – accused of deliberately infecting some 426 children with HIV – which was just as flawed as the original trial, struck down in December 2005 by the Supreme Court.

The trial was compromised in advance, and clearly based on political considerations, as Libyan leader Muammar al-Kadhafi had declared the nurses and doctor guilty before it even began.

This sentence flies in the face of the basic requirements of a fair trial, since testimonies were achieved through torture.

The Bureau urges the Libyan authorities to release the nurses and doctor who, according to conclusive evidence provided by renowned international experts, are innocent.

Should appeal proceedings launched by the nurses and doctor nonetheless be pursued before the Supreme Court, it urges the authorities to ensure that they fulfil the basic requirements of a fair trial, including full respect for the rights of the defence, and that such proceedings are carried out promptly.

The Bureau recalls the position of the Parliamentary Assembly on this case, Recommendation 1726(2005), and, beyond the unacceptable character of the trial, reaffirms its complete rejection of capital punishment.

The Bureau continues to be seized of the plight of the children, who are victims of the AIDS virus, and reiterates its compassion for them and sympathy with the families. It strongly supports the efforts of the international community, including the most recent offer of the Spanish authorities to provide healthcare and other forms of support for these children.”